

VZCZCXR06381
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #0682/01 1121713
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 221713Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5798
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 1171
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0216
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1825
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0776
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000682

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA
BAGHDAD FOR DMCCULLOUGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/22/2019
TAGS: PGOV PREL KCOR NI PU TO

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADOR YATES MEETING WITH FONMIN
MADUEKWE -- BISSAU AND TOGO DISCUSSED

REF: A. SECSTATE 28079
1B. ABUJA 418

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Deputy Commander for Civil Military Affairs for the Africa Command, Ambassador Mary Yates, along with Ambassador Sander, met with Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe at his home on April 21 where Yates briefed the FonMin on the new programmatic developments at Africa Command. Yates also highlighted her participation in the April 17-24 ECOWAS-Africa Strategic Studies Center (ACSS) conference on security sector reform (SSR) and her upcoming trip to Guinea Bissau. She also took advantage of the opportunity to ask the FonMin his views on other simmering issues in the Africa region, most notably the recent developments in Togo. The FonMin briefed Yates on his March 2009 trip to the U.S. and his meetings with the Secretary of State and Senator Feingold, noting that his primary desire was to ensure that they understood that Nigeria was not all bad, and that the Government of President Yar'Adua was committed to issues such as electoral reform and the fight against corruption. End Summary.

New Programs at Africa Command:

12. (C) Ambassador Yates began the dialogue by restating the purpose and structure of Africa Command, and emphasizing the position of the Secretary of Defense and General Ward that the Command would remain in Germany for the immediate future.

She added that in her April 20 press conference at Ambassador Sanders, residence, she had explained this similar point, noting also that the current focus is more on ensuring that the Command structure is right and that the programs being developed supported and were responsive to what African civilian and military leaders said they need in the region. As a result, the programmatic efforts of the Command had matured and there were a number of new projects that addressed maritime awareness, security, fisheries, and the ever-growing threats from drug trafficking in the region.

Yates then highlighted the recent U.S. Navy Africa Partnership Station (APS) visit to Lagos and how this kind of platform provides a positive way to encourage and foster cooperation and coordination with all militaries in general, and African militaries in particular. She noted the three Nigerian APS participants who held leadership positions on

the recent APS, including one serving as a deputy to the Commodore of the APS/USS Nashville.

ACSS Conference, Guinea Bissau and Togo:

¶3. (C) Ambassador Yates then turned to highlight her specific reasons for being in Nigeria as regards to the joint conference sponsored by ECOWAS, ACSS, and the National Defense College of Nigeria (NDC). She explained to the FonMin that the seminar focused on security sector reform which was very apropos given recent instability issues in Guinea-Bissau, the coup in Mauritania, and problems in Togo.

Yates noted that the focus of her speech later on the evening of April 21 would be on how Africa Command can be supportive of African civilian and military leaders as they try to address these issues under the umbrella of ECOWAS. Yates also highlighted ECOWAS's leadership and its ability to be pro-active on these issues. She then asked the FonMin for his assessment of Guinea-Bissau as she was headed there in a few days. Ambassador Sanders added that Nigeria as chairman of ECOWAS had been helpful in making public statements against any effort to turn back the tide on democracy on the continent, and that the FonMin had been very vocal on issues ranging from Zimbabwe to the coup in Mauritania, to participating in two ECOWAS assessment missions to Guinea-Bissau. The FonMin began by noting that it was very important to keep forward movement in Guinea-Bissau as he too was very worried that any political vacuum would provide more fertile ground for narco-traffickers. Similar to previous comments in ref B, Maduekwe recounted his analysis that the personal animosity

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between the late Bissauan President Vieira, and his Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) had been exploited. Although there was no proof, he opined that the late Bissauan President was smart enough to know that if anything had happened to his CDS, then he was a "dead man," so Vieira, he believed, could not have been behind the CDS's assassination. He told Yates that Vieira had sought Nigeria's help in personal protection just prior to his assassination, more out of fear of the narco-traffickers. In addition Maduekwe added that it was important to ensure that the inquiry into what actually happened as regards to the assassinations continued, as it would help the healing process of the country.

¶4. (C) Yates followed by asking the FonMin what suggestions he would have for specifically addressing military reform issues that were needed in Bissau. She highlighted ECOWAS President Chambas's comments (see septel) that some sort of pension fund was needed to take care of any military elements affected by reform, which would include reduction of force size, noting Chambas said ECOWAS had committed \$5 million for this purpose. Maduekwe agreed that reducing of force size and addressing pension needs were critical to making this work. He also explained that he would add improving the standard of living for the military, including building or refurbishing their barracks. The Nigerian FonMin, similar to Chambas earlier that morning, said he was hopeful that, with these things and the international community's continued interest, successful elections could possibly get things moving in the right direction. Yates said she planned to listen to all sides on the reform issues, including a former retired U.S. Ambassador who had been living in the country for 15 years or more.

¶5. (C) Turning to Togo, Ambassador Sanders thanked Maduekwe for squeezing the meeting in prior to the latter's departure for Lome. She noted that she and Ambassador Yates had just left President Chambas' office and understood that they would be traveling together. The FonMin said that he and Chambas would be taking one of the planes in the Yar'Adua presidential fleet, and that the Nigerian President specifically had asked him to go to Togo as developments there were cause for concern. Ambassador Yates asked Maduekwe what his current take of the situation was. She highlighted

recent concerns the USG has with the build up of resident Columbian drug traffickers as well as the narco-trafficking there overall, and that if Togo did not find a way to strengthen its security framework on this issue, it could overwhelm and spiral out of control. Maduekwe agreed, adding that he thought the current Togolese President was doing everything right to combat narco-traffickers, but on the internal political side that he may need to look at allowing for more openness. The Nigeria Foreign Minister closed out the discussion by noting that ECOWAS and the international community needed to watch the issues in Togo very closely so that it did not develop further into another unstable country in the region.

EFCC:

¶6. (C) Never losing an opportunity to discuss the GON's continuing unhappiness with our position on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Foreign Minister highlighted his recent trip to the United States and his meetings with both SecState and Senator Feingold. He said that there was still a lot of concern in his government over the USG's non-interaction with the EFCC, but that he had an opportunity to openly discuss his government views with both the Secretary and the Senator. On the latter, he noted that he expected to have a difficult meeting, but said that he and the Senator had a frank discussion where he told the Senator that there were a lot of challenges in Nigeria, but everything and everyone in Nigeria was not all bad. He concluded that the GON desire, given the US-GON partnership, is for the two countries to at least reopen engagement with the EFCC, even if we do not agree, noting that friendly nations should still be able to have a dialogue with the EFCC leadership. (Note: Ambassador Yates was briefed on the GON's

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views on our stance on the EFCC prior to any meetings with GON officials).

¶7. (U) Ambassador Yates departed prior to this cable being drafted.

SANDERS